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<p>Tiivistelmä-Referat-Abstract</p> <p>The aim of my research is to study representative democracy and the public sphere as a domain of democracy through four specific decision-making processes.</p> <p>According to Habermas, the public sphere is an analytical category between the state and civil society, and embraces more than just the media, serving as a common theatre for citizens, with free access and quality of discourse.</p> <p>The structural transformation of the public sphere includes the trends of modernity, specifically globalization and mediaization. These trends have also affected the nation state and its exercise of power. Mediaization has made the exercise of power transparent but, at the same time, fragile because of political scandals, leaks and outbursts.</p> <p>I explore modernity's tendency to globalize through two cases: Finland's decision to enter the European Union's Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) among the first countries and the development of trade policy during the early stages of the World Trade Organization (WTO). To analyze the role of mediaization two more cases are studied: the privatization of Sonera, including the political scandal which led to the dismissal of Pekka Vennamo as CEO and the resignation of Matti Aura as a Minister, and the Ministry of Labour's attempts to restructure labour policy, which led to the so-called "Black Lists" scandal and the fear of a threat to freedom of the press.</p> <p>The thesis is a case study, based upon interview material, which is analyzed and cast as narrative, using "grounded theory". Media response is analyzed with the help of content analysis.</p> <p>The interpretation and conclusions of the study are based upon comparison of the actors in each case, the information and communication (I&C) structures, along with the impacts of mediaization and globalization. My major conclusions are that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - there is "oligarchy" with oligarchy in Finnish political life, which means that part of the political elite is excluded from the I&C structures; - information flows but no communication takes place; the commitment of the political elite to its decisions, including rational-critical debate, is weak; - globalization is seen as a given, neither analyzed or challenged by the elite; there is no strategy other than making sure that the country is represented in the forums where the decisions are made; - mediaization is powerful, with the media being able to change the direction and focus of political news without any internal checks or scrutiny, particularly in the case of scandals; - the role of entertainment, including the phenomenon of tabloidization, is a strong factor in the new ethos of journalism; the public sphere is far from being the ideal domain for rationalcritical debate serving the needs of democracy; - the media merely make noise rather than analyze; - Finnish governance is technocratic rather than political, so that democracy is silent. 		
<p>Avainsanat-Nyckelord-Keywords</p> <p>democracy - public sphere - Finland</p> <p>decision making - transparency</p> <p>mediaization - politics</p>		
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